

195
AUTHENTIC
ANECDOTES

OF

GEORGE LUKINS,

The YATTON DÆMONIAC;

WITH

A VIEW OF

The CONTROVERSY,

AND

A FULL REFUTATION

Of the IMPOSTURE.

By SAMUEL NORMAN,

Member of the Corporation of Surgeons, in *London*,
And SURGEON, at YATTON.

Try the Spirits.——

Prove all Things; and hold fast that which is good.

B R I S T O L :

Printed by G. ROUTH, for SAM. JOHNSON, Bookseller, in
Corn-Street; sold also by T. EVANS and SON, Paternoster-Row,
and G. BOURNE, Pantion-Street, Haymarket, *London*.

(Price ONE SHILLING.)

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

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BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

Author of the Dictionary of the English Language, in Four Volumes, 4to, 1773, 1774, 1775, 1776.

Printed by W. Johnston, at the Stationers' Hall, in St. Paul's Church-yard, London.

(Printed by W. Johnston)

[Stationers' Hall, London]

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN I first replied to W. R. W. I did not expect to be drawn into a controversy of such length; but the pertinacious malevolence and misrepresentations of that writer, made it necessary for me to rejoin, in which I made use of some severe expressions, at once to convince my antagonist that I knew him, and that if he persisted in such calumnious abuse and evasions, I would drag him out into public notice. His next replication was so unjustifiable in every point of view, that I was desired by some particular friends, unreservedly to expose him. But the impressions of former friendship were not obliterated; and disdaining wantonly to trample upon the feelings of a defenceless foe, I determined to write him a private letter, to offer him easy terms of accommodation. His reply was of that nature, as to oblige me personally to attack him in the public papers. For this reason I publish those letters in their proper order of time, as introductory to the subsequent correspondence.

It is now left with the world to judge, whether he has not most justly merited the chastisement he has received. I hope it will at least have this good effect upon him, to teach him that insolence, prevarication and personal abuse, are at all times unbecoming the character of a gentleman; and that the pusillanimous abuse of an anonymous scribbler, ought not to pass unpunished, and will generally meet its reward.

The reasons which induced me to write on this subject, are spoken to in my narrative ; and I have only to request the candid reader, to accept my intention for the performance ; and generously to overlook those inaccuracies of expression, which he will too often meet with, as the natural consequences of but a mediocrity of understanding, and hurry of business in the line of my profession.

S. N.

YATTON, Aug. 29, 1786.



AUTHENTIC

AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES,
O F
GEORGE LUKINS, &c.

From the BRISTOL GAZETTE.

S I R.

WHEN you can spare room in your Gazette, I think you will not be able to present your readers with any account so extraordinary and surprizing as the following. It is the most singular case of perverted reason and bodily suffering that I ever heard of; nor have the most learned and ingenious persons been able to solve the phenomenon, much less to administer relief to the afflicted object. You may depend on the authenticity of every part of the relation; a member of my family having been near 30 years minister of the place where the person resides, many of my friends still inhabiting it, and myself having been frequently a witness to the facts, I shall mention.

About 18 years ago the unfortunate subject of this epistle, going about the neighbourhood with other young fellows, acting Christmas plays or mummeries, suddenly fell down senseless, and was with great difficulty recovered. When he came to himself, the account he gave was, that he seemed at the moment of his fall to have received a violent blow from the hand of some person, who, as he thought, was allowed thus to punish him for acting a part in the play. From that moment, he has been subject, at uncertain and different periods, to fits of a most singular and dreadful nature. The first symptom is a powerful agitation of the right hand, to which succeed terrible distortions of the countenance. The influence of the fit has then commenced. He declares in a roaring voice that he is the Devil, who with many horrid execrations summons about him certain persons devoted to his will, and commands them to torture this unhappy patient with all the diabolical means in their power. The supposed demon then directs his servants to sing. Accordingly the patient sings in a different voice a jovial hunting song, which having received the approbation of *the foul fiend*, is succeeded by a song in a female voice, very delicately expressed; and this is followed, at the particular injunction of the demon,

demon, by a pastoral-song in the form of a dialogue, sung by, and in the real character of, the patient himself. After a pause and more violent distortions, he again personates the demon, and sings in a hoarse, frightful voice, another hunting song. But in all these songs whenever any expressions of goodness, benevolence, or innocence, occurs in the original, it is regularly changed to another of its opposite meaning: neither can the patient bear to hear any good words whatever, nor any expression relating to the church, during the influence of his fit, but is exasperated by them into the most shocking degree of blasphemy and outrage. Neither can he speak or write any expressions of this tendency, whilst the subsequent weakness of his fits is upon him; but is driven to madness by their mention. Having performed the songs, he continues to personate the demon, and derides the attempts which the patient has been making to get out of his power, that he will persecute and torment him more and more to the end of his life, and that all the efforts of parsons and physicians shall prove fruitless. An *inverted* * *Te Deum* is then sung in the alternate voices of a man and a woman, who with much profaneness thank the demon for having given them power over the patient, which they will continue to exercise as long as he lives. The demon then concludes the ceremony, by declaring his unalterable resolution to punish him for ever; and after barking fiercely, and interspersing many assertions of his own diabolical dignity, the fit subsides into the same strong agitation of the hand that introduced it, and the patient recovers from its influence utterly weakened and exhausted. At certain periods of the fit, he is so violent that an assistant is always obliged to be at hand, to restrain him from committing some injury on himself, though to the spectators he is perfectly harmless. He understands all that is said and done during his fits, and will even reply sometimes to questions asked him. He is under the influence of these paroxysms generally near an hour; during which time his eyes are fast closed. Sometimes he fancies himself changed into the form of an animal; when he assumes all the motions and sounds that are peculiar to it. From the execrations he utters it may be presumed that he is or was of an abandoned and profligate character, but the reverse is the truth; he was ever of a remarkable innocent, and inoffensive disposition. Every method that the variety of persons who have come to see him have suggested, every effort of some very ingenious gentlemen of the faculty who applied their serious attention to his case, has been long ago and recently exerted without success; and some years ago he was sent to St. George's Hospital, where he remained about twenty weeks, and was pronounced incurable. Of late, he has every day at least three and sometimes nine of these fits, which have reduced him to great weakness and almost to despair; for he cannot hear any virtuous or religious

* Our very judicious author it is presumed intended to write **PERVERTED**.

gious expression used without pain and horror. The emaciated and exhausted figure that he presents, the number of years that he has been subject to this malady, and the prospect of want and distress that lies before him through being thus disabled from following his business, all preclude the suspicion of imposture. His life is become a series of intense pain and anxiety.

Should any of your readers question the authenticity of this relation, or conceive themselves able to administer relief, or even mitigation to this afflicted object, you know your correspondent and have my free consent to refer them to me.

I remain, your very humble servant,

Wrington, June 5, 1788.

W. R. W.

A short account of the singular deliverance of George Lukins, (the above afflicted man,) of the Parish of Yatton in the County of Somerset, aged 44, and by trade a Taylor.

SOME persons who had been acquainted with his unhappy situation for many years, had heard him repeatedly say that he was possessed with seven devils, and if seven ministers could be got to pray with him in faith, they would be cast out. But his declaration being treated as a visionary matter, he remained in his former state notwithstanding every means made use of for his cure.—However, a person who felt much for his deplorable case, had him brought to Bristol last week to see if any thing could be done for him, and to meet the subject on his own ground of an expected cure.

After he had been here a few days, and was seen by many persons in his fits or spasms, (who observed that the particular circumstances attending them fully coincided with the above letter) several Ministers were prevailed upon to meet on the occasion.—They accordingly met in the Vestry room of Temple-Church, on Friday the 13th instant, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, attended by the poor man, and several other persons to assist in managing of him in his fits :†—And the following is a relation of some of the particulars on the above awful occasion.

1. They began singing an hymn, on which the man was immediately thrown into strange agitations, (very different from his usual seizures); his face was first variously distorted and his whole body strongly convulsed. His right hand and arm then began to shake with violence, and after some violent throes, he spake in a deep hoarse, hollow voice, *personating an invisible agent* calling the man to an account, and upbraiding him as a fool for bringing that silly company together, said it was to no purpose, and swore “by his infernal den,” that he would never quit his hold of him, but
would

† When no man has been present, a boy of ten or eleven years old hath frequently held him in his fits; and a single man of moderate strength, could in his attacks always hold him at Yatton.

would torment him a thousand times worse for making the vain attempt.

2. He then began to sing in his usual manner, (*still personating some invisible agent*) horribly blaspheming, boasted of his power, and vowed eternal vengeance on the miserable object, and on those present for daring to oppose him; and commanded his "faithful and obedient servants" to appear and take their stations.

3. He then spake in a female voice, very expressive of scorn and derision, and demanded to know why the fool had brought such a company there? and swore "by the devil" that he would not quit his hold of him, and bid defiance to, and cursed all who should attempt to rescue the miserable object from them. He then sung, in the same female voice a kind of love song, at the conclusion of which he was violently tortured, and repeated most horrid imprecations.

4. Another invisible agent came forth, assuming a different voice, but his manner much the same as the preceding one. A kind of dialogue was then sung in a hoarse and soft voice alternately; at the conclusion of which, as before, the man was thrown into violent agonies and blasphemed in a manner too dreadful to be expressed.

5. He then personated, and said, "I am the great Devil;" and after much boasting of his power and bidding defiance to all his opposers, sung a kind of hunting song; at the conclusion of which he was most violently tortured, so that it was with difficulty that two strong men could hold him (though he is but a small man and very weak in constitution); sometimes he would set up a hedious laugh, and at other times bark in a manner indubitably horrid.

6. After this he summoned all the infernals to appear, and drive the company away. And while the ministers were engaged in fervent prayer, he sung a Te Deum to the devil, in different voices,*—saying, "We praise thee, O devil; we acknowledge thee to be the supreme governor," &c. &c.

7. When the noise was so great as to obstruct the company proceeding in prayer, they sung together an hymn suitable to the occasion. Whilst they were in prayer, the voice which personated the great Devil bid them defiance, cursing and vowing dreadful vengeance on all present. One in the company commanded him in the name of the great Jehovah to declare his name? To which he replied, "I am the Devil." The same person then charged him in the name of Jehovah to declare why he tormented the man? To which he made answer, "That I may shew my power amongst men."†

8. The

* It may not be improper to remark, that this man was not a ventriloquist; that he spake in different voices, singly, and distinctly, like other men: and that being adjured in Greek and Latin by Mr. McGeary, the pretended Devils were so unclassical as not to be able to reply. And so easy is it to immitate George Lukins in all his manœuvres, that several in Yatten completely personate him for the diversion of themselves or strangers.

† A very subtle devil indeed thus to detect and defeat himself!

8. The poor man still remained in great agonies and torture, and prayer was continued for his deliverance. A clergyman present desired him to endeavour to speak the name of "Jesus," and several times repeated it to him, at all of which he replied "Devil."—during this attempt a small faint voice was heard saying, "Why don't you adjure?" On which the clergyman commanded, in the name of Jesus, and in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the evil spirit to depart from the man; which he repeated several times:—when a voice was heard to say, "Must I give up my power?" and this was followed by dreadful howlings. Soon after another voice, as with astonishment, said, "Our master has deceived us."—The clergyman still continuing to repeat the adjuration, a voice was heard to say, "Where shall we go?" and the reply was,—"To hell, thine own infernal den, and return no more to torment this man:—"On this the man's agitations and distortions were stronger than ever, attended with the most dreadful howling that can be conceived. But as soon as this conflict was over, he said, in his own natural voice, "Blessed Jesus!"—became quite serene, immediately praised God for his deliverance, and kneeling down said the Lord's prayer, and returned his most devout thanks to all who were present.

The meeting broke up a little before one o'clock, having lasted near two hours, and the man went away entirely delivered, and has had no return of the disorder since.

We lay the above narrative before the public, as authenticated to us by several persons who were present, and on whose veracity we can depend; we forbear making any comment on the subject, but leave our readers in possession of the facts, to give that credibility to the various circumstances as the whole or any part of so extraordinary a relation may deserve.

June 18, 1788.

The seven Ministers employed in this awful and marvellous undertaking were the Reverend JOSEPH EASTERBROOK, Vicar of Temple;

Messrs. T. M'GEARY, Schoolmaster,
W. HUNT, Taylor,
J. VALTON,
J. BROADBENT,
J. BRETTEL,
B. RHODES,

} Lay Divines in Connection
with Mr. WESLEY.

Some few others of the ELDER were present, but no one from the neighbourhood of Yatton.

S I R,

SINCE your last week's paper appeared, I have received frequent applications from gentlemen in Bristol, and other parts of the kingdom, desiring in their own name, and in the name of multitudes

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that

that I would either authenticate, or oppose the account therein given, of the deliverance of George Lukins. In order therefore to satisfy the desire of the public, I have diligently considered the little history you have published of that extraordinary case, and freely own, that if you correct the errata, and put *adjure*, for *abjure*, and *adjuration* for *abjuration*, you will then give the world a genuine, faithful, and true narrative of the principal circumstances and phrases, which really occurred, in the morning of Friday the 13th instant, in the vestry room of Temple Church. Let me beg the favor of you to republish the narrative thus corrected, and you and the public at large may be assured, that the whole of that marvellous relation will then be fairly stated and justly expressed.

I am Sir, your very humble servant,

JOSEPH EASTERBROOK,
Vicar of Temple, Bristol.

June 24, 1788.

S I R,

FEW things could surprise me more than the narrative of George Lukins's case, published in your paper of the 19th instant. by W. R. W. of Wrington, and that too as introductory to the cure of the pretended *dæmoniac*.

I doubt not but that many pious people will give implicit belief to the whole story; and it is with the sincerest regret that I find myself obliged from a love to plain truth, to give a brief and faithful relation of that case. I know too well the narrow limits of my abilities as a writer, not to tremble at even the thought of a literary discussion, with so able an opponent; but trusting to that generosity and candour which an enlightened public will ever extend to the cause of truth, though exhibited in the poor garb of simplicity only, I insist myself its votary. Indeed without this persuasion I should not venture thus to address myself to you.

In the latter end of the year 1769, or beginning of 1770, G. Lukins of Yatton, the person whose case I have been speaking of, with some young people, went to the house of the late Mr. Love, to perform Christmas plays. Mr. Love being of a generous disposition, gave them so much liquor as to intoxicate them. G. Lukins was greatly overloaded, and in endeavouring to walk out, fell down at the door, where he remained till assistance was given him. The next day, and for a considerable time after, he pretended he was hurt by Mr. Love's dog. Soon after this incident, his fits commenced. In some few weeks he pretended he was bewitched. At certain intervals his fits would return, or he would be speechless during a determinate space of time, always foretold by himself.— Sometimes he attempted to run into a pond or shallow river. At other times he would leap, howl, &c. and distort himself violently. Several

Several times he danced in a large chimney corner, upon burning coals ; and lay down on a box near a large fire, covered with many cloaths, and sweated profusely. During all his pretended paroxysms he has fully retained his different senses and understanding, from the first of his performances to the termination of them. But his curses, execrations, and expressions during his fits have notwithstanding been most truly horrible.

All these oddities were attributed to the power of witchcraft, or influence of an evil spirit. In June 1770, I settled at Yatton, and for some time lodged in the same house with this man ; so that I had frequent opportunities to see him in his fits ; in every one of which except in singing, he performed not more than most active young people can easily do. I except singing for this reason, because many have neither an ear for music nor knowledge of notes ; but from his youth this man was, as it were, bred to singing. Convinced that all his complaints were feigned, or occasioned by hypochondriacism, I directed the people to permit him to trample on the fire, or run into the river or the pool, which were very shallow, and observed to them, that no ill consequences could follow, as in case of necessity they could instantly save him.—From that time he left off those attempts, and the fears of his friends on that head were dissipated. To prove himself bewitched, he gave me and others many relations of the power of witches, their iniquitous practices and punishments for them. When he would be thought speechless, he could thrust his tongue out of his mouth towards his nose or chin, make use of it in every manner necessary for speech ; modify his voice to almost all sounds ; and being perfectly sensible at those times, singing many agreeable tunes, swallowing and doing every act and thing with understanding and precision, and having the free and proper use of every part and organ subservient to speech ; no good reason can possibly be assigned for his obstinate taciturnity, but his predetermination. Soon after I saw him, he thought, or pretended that his fingers were contracted, and kept his fist clinched : but I easily put his fingers out straight, and kept them so upon a hand-board, without occasioning swelling, pain or spasm, which could not have been the case had there been a contraction of the muscular and tendinous parts. His next subterfuge was a pretended contraction of his thumb, which he would pertinaciously keep close to the palm of his hand. I had previously given up the care of him, being disgusted at his ridiculous pretences : but to convince the family where he lodged of the impropriety of this trick also, I desired a discreet man with whom he slept, to observe his hand in the morning before he awoke ; so watchful was the patient, that it was several mornings before this could be done ; at length, however, Mr. P. instantly recollecting himself when he awoke, gently turned down the bedcloaths, and found his thumb fully extended, and at rest upon his breast. Mr. P. then pretended to awake disturbed, and

George Lukins awaking, instantly contracted his thumb as before. I need not draw any inference; the intelligent reader must discern the cause of this complaint: but the principles of compassion operated too powerfully upon many for them to allow themselves even to reason upon his case. About that time a person of credit reading in the bible, designedly pronounced father improperly; our patient was at that time as speechless as at different other times: but he endeavoured as she thought to tell her: she as often repeated that word wrongly, till at last our speechless actor hastily gave her the proper pronunciation, and then appeared as recollecting himself and greatly distressed.

He continued in the same way a long time, till by means of a petition he had collected something considerable; soon after which his complaints left him, or he them. It must be admitted, that wrong apprehensions produce various influences upon the body, which people of weak understanding may greatly suffer from. The cases of a young man and a young woman, who went to see George Lukins in his paroxysms, if I may so call them, fully prove this.

The first was a servant man of Mr. John Young, of this parish. Soon after seeing George Lukins, he fancied himself bewitched, and appeared greatly affrighted, distorted his face and limbs, bellowing, leaping, falling down, acting, and singing with, as it were, different voices, very much like him. His master hastened to my house, and desired me to go with him. It was agreed between us, that if I found it prudent, I should be allowed to threaten either himself, Mrs. Young, or any of the family. The fellow on my arrival appeared all distraction. I treated him roughly; threatened his master, &c. for hearkening to the fool; insisted instantly upon bleeding him, vomited him, and on the next morning purged him briskly. The fellow, expecting a daily repetition of the same treatment, assumed by the morning his proper understanding, and followed his business as before.—The other was a poor girl of Ghelvey. This girl was affected in the same manner, and from the same cause as Mr. Young's man-servant. She was supposed to be lunatic or hysteric, by her neighbours. I was employed for her, and gave her, at the request of the overseer, large quantities of antispasmodic or nervous medicines, during the space of five or six days, without the least benefit; when pursuing my own inclination, I exhibited two furly emetics a little while before the appointed times for the return of her fits; leaving her wholly at other times, to herself during her performances, and in two or three days she left them off, and was fully restored to a due sense of her folly.

But to return to the case of George Lukins. He remained a considerable time free from his pretended fits, and followed his business as a Taylor, or some other employment. But the same disposition returning, his old tricks were renewed. The attention of most people was again attracted to him, and many schemes to rescue him from
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the hands of the witches were devised and employed: even pretended conjurors were sought out & applied to; but their directions and exorcisms were practised in vain. But shameful to think of, several very indigent and infirm old people were again cruelly censured for bewitching him. At length he was sent to St. George's Hospital in London, where he remained many weeks. Some of the faculty there desired to be sent for whenever his fits returned; but this never happened, after he was duly admitted as a patient in that hospital, notwithstanding the punctuality with which his fits ever have returned, according to his own prognostications, before and since his return thence. We must not suppose that an intimation from the nurse of the beneficial effects, in such cases, of the laced waistcoat could operate so powerfully as to drive the witches or devils, whether *he* or *she*, *small* or *great*, out of him; but it seems an undoubted fact, that he never had a fit after he went before the board of governors in that hospital. After his return to his brother's at Yaton, he played off the same feats. His brother grew tired of him, and Richard Beacham of this parish was desired to lodge him. He consulted me on the occasion. I advised both him and his wife to take him in, and gave it as my opinion, that they would not suffer the least inconvenience from his lodging with them; being fully persuaded that he would not have any fits, if he was not suffered to see, or be seen by, any persons at their house, during the times he may be desirous of exhibiting his feats. For the space of several months he stayed with them, and the event justified my opinion. After he left R. Beacham's house, a very long interval elapsed before he again commenced his old performances, which happened in the course of last year. He was not, however, so forgetful of his interest, as not to have recourse to another petition. All his former mockeries or performances were sometimes attributed to the power of the devil; but since this last renewal of them, after pretending to wound a poor inoffensive old woman because she bewitched him, he has now fully and generally attributed all his absurdities and abominable performances to the invisible influence of *fatan* only. In his performances the commencement and duration of which have always been foretold by him, if any well informed person, under pretence of holding him, would not support him so as to enable him to play off his tricks, without suffering him to fall or injure himself, he has constantly left off that part of his antics, and substituted another in its stead; and unusual and horrible as his tricks have been through the whole continuance of them, he has taken due care at all times not materially to injure himself or any person. So that he appears to have been possessed with the act of volition, fully and perfectly at all times, enjoying also his powers of observation, recollection, and reasoning, as completely during his abominable antics and horrible blasphemies, as at any other time. I am surpris'd to see him represented as in a meagre and emaciated state: this is by no means the case

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Allowing for his increase of years, I have not known him look better than at the present time; and if walking between twenty and thirty miles in seven or eight hours is not a full proof of his strength which he has done very lately, I wish to know what will or can be deemed such. With equal truth is the assertion made, of his keeping his eyes fast during his fits, for he takes care frequently to peep, or slyly to squint at his wise visitors. The late pious Mr. Wake, our vicar, soon looked upon his pretences with due contempt. And I hope this plain account of the subject will prevent the honest and well meaning from being deceived by groundless pretences.

S. N.

Yatton, June 21, 1788.

S I R,

WHEN a man stands forth to contradict facts that have been asserted to the Public, it is at least necessary that he confine himself within the limits of *truth*. Folly, nonsense and inconsistency we may easily pardon, as being the natural effects of constitutional infirmity; but if to promote his cause he calls in the assistance of direct falsehood, it is a convincing evidence that truth alone is not able to support it.

I am led to these reflections by a most curious epistle in your last paper, signed S. N. the humane writer of which endeavours to fix upon the once unhappy, but now rejoicing parishioner of Yatton, the stigma of an *Impostor*. But how weakly, let the flimsy, the frivolous, the false allegations it contains, abundantly testify. All the little dirty, contemptible trash that of course has arisen in such a length of time from so extraordinary an affair, has this opener of the eyes of the public raked together in order to invalidate the strong facts that are before them. And he begins his declamation with assuring the world, (as an ingenious first principle from which the subsequent phenomena originated) that the man was at the beginning of them intoxicated with liquor.—Marvellous consideration! worthy no doubt both of solving the appearances that followed, and of totally discrediting the sufferer. But what will this candid, enlightened, and enlightening dictator say, if in direct terms I contradict his assertion? if I declare from the testimony of a credible witness present on the memorable occasion, that none of the young fellows were in the least intoxicated, and if I consider this accusation as being merely founded on the circumstance of having performed their mummeries at the mirthful period of Christmas? One wilful falsehood, sir is sufficient to vitiate a whole story, as well as the testimony of the relator.

But admitting that Lukins was, as this writer—facetiously elegant—expresses it, *greatly overloaded*, is his inebriation at that moment competent to account for the violent fits, convulsions, and paroxysms of nature, to which he was for eighteen years and nineteen weeks at different periods subject? is it credible that a young man in a decent trade,

trade, of a reputable family, religiously educated, of a remarkably meek and inoffensive disposition, should without any visible motive whatever, with no prospect of gain, assume such dreadful appearances, the natural tendency of which was to affright his neighbours, and harass his affectionate family?—all impostures are projected with some design: even *Elizabeth Canning* may be suspected to have had an interested motive, and the purpose of the *Cock Lane Ghost* was discovered to have been mercenary.—But in this case, the most acute sagacity cannot discern any advantage that could accrue from the assumption: on the contrary, this man, though ever prone to industry, was frequently disabled from prosecuting his employment, and became a subject of horror and distress, to himself, to his friends, and to his species in general. Can it be wondered at if in these deplorable circumstances the hand of compassion was extended to him, when his hopeless infirmities forbade him to earn his own livelihood, and compelled him frequently to be an unwilling burthen upon his humble family? The emaciated figure that he was used to present, his pallid eye, and woeful countenance were sufficient indications in the view of humanity that his miseries were something different from assumptive; and as to his walking in a short time to and from Bristol during the intervals of his fits, that undertaking is very naturally attributed to his industrious and grateful disposition, (which prompted him to exert his strength to the utmost in the service of his family) and his speed on the occasion—for he is but a little light man—to his apprehension, lest his fits should seize him on the road; as, notwithstanding all his precautions, they have frequently done, and he has been obliged to retire behind the next hedge, and there in solitude to go through the whole series of his unaccountable disorder.*

His eyes were undoubtedly, in general, fast closed during his fits; but as he used to be perfectly sensible at those times, it is no very wise proof of imposture that he sometimes opened them at the entrance of strange company, on hearing a noise, &c. Great stress is laid too by this correspondent of your's on his having forced open the patient's hand, whilst it was fast clinched. On which heroic act I shall only observe; that the strongest men in the place have frequently in vain attempted—even to the hazard of breaking one of his fingers—to do with all their force what this boastful person in forms the public, *he did with ease*.

He proceeds to tell us that the patient's hand, though strongly contracted in the day time, was during his sleep early in the morning perceived to be open. And cannot this sage gentleman, if he really knows any thing of the doctrine of the animal frame, easily conceive the possibility, nay the natural tendency of sleep to relax the muscular exertion? It is not contended that the contraction was perpetual:

* How consistent! this writer asserts in his first letter under the signature of W. R. W. that at certain periods of the fits, he is so violent that an assistant is always obliged to be at hand, to restrain him from committing some injury on himself."

perputal : on the contrary, it was uncertain both in its periods and duration. Where then is the wonder if it occasionally retired under mitigating influence of slumber, and gradually returned with the awakening strength of the patient ?

I am sick of such puerile insinuation, and have hardly patience to mention the stories of the two persons who *thought* themselves bewitched after having seen *Lukins*. For what is the logick of these curious instances ? These persons *thought* themselves bewitched, and assumed the appearance of diabolical possession; *therefore* *LUKINS* *thought* himself bewitched, and assumed the appearance, &c. Let us apply this ingenious reasoning to a supposed case of persons of weak nerves going to see the undoubted madmen in *Bedlam*: they come home so shocked at what they have seen and heard, that their imagination is affected, they *fancy* themselves in the situation of the *Bedlamites*, and become for a time frantic; but are reduced to reason by the salutary power of medicine : when behold in steps a strange dogmatical character, and undertakes to prove from the temporary impression caught by the recovered parties, that the *Bedlamites* *themselves* are in their sober senses; and this is his argument. The former persons having seen the *Bedlamites* ASSUMED the appearance of madness: therefore the *Bedlamites* only ASSUMED the appearance of madness.—*Risum teneatis?* If your correspondent be a medical man, I think he should not expote his practice. Bleeding, vomiting, and purging one patient in the space of a few hours, and giving another *two surly emeticks* in a short space before the expected return of the fit, remind one of the victorious practice of *Drs. Laet and Sangrado*; the former of whom having, as *Foote* says, opened the front door, and the back door if the enemy would not go out, it was no fault of the doctor.

S. N. condescends to acknowledge that *Lukins* was a patient for this disorder in St. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL *many weeks*.—He was so indeed, Sir; the weeks were so many that they wanted but three of half a year. There, your faithful correspondent first asserts boldly that "his fits never returned after he was duly admitted as a patient in the hospital," and presently adds, with a degree of recollective discretion, "but it *seems* an undoubted fact that he never had a fit after he went before" (is your correspondent an *Irishman* or an *American*?) "the Board of Governors." But from bold unqualified assertion, and from seeming arguments, let us resort to *plain truth*: and the plain truth is, that *Lukins* was troubled with his fits *through the whole time*, at different intervals, of his residence in the hospital; that he was very desirous of being seen under their influence by the faculty; and that none of them, the house-surgeon excepted, ever saw him in those situations. So that S. N. has committed *another small mistake*, in saying that the faculty desired to be sent for, whenever his fits returned.

But as I have given some fair evidencies of the *acuteness*, the *veracity*, and the *candid disposition* of your correspondent, (who no doubt has

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has undertaken this enquiry from the purest of motives, and not from any pique that the parish never thought it *worth while to ask his opinion*, nor employ *him* for the recovery,) so let me give you a striking instance of his great humanity and his judgement. "Convinced," says he, "that all his complaints were feigned or occasioned by *hypochondriacism*, I directed the people to permit him to trample on the fire, or run into the river."—Here let me offer a tribute of applause to those rulers of the parish, who from these symptoms of judgment and philanthropy in the magnanimous S. N. intrusted not this unhappy patient to *the tender mercies of his direction*. Whether *Lukins* was an imposter, or labouring 'under the influence of a deplorable hypochondriacism, (that urges the sufferers to acts of madness and desperation, from which *common minds* would be vigilant to restrain them) it was equally proper that he should be permitted to trample on the fire, and run into the river! This indeed outdoes *Drs. Last and Sangrado*: THEY only used mitigations of disorders; *this immortal genius* would put an immediate stop to all complaints, by letting the patient fulfil his comical whims and vagaries, by the exhibition of a *due quantity of pure water*, or the administration of the *actual cautery*. Fire and water! simple remedies, Sir, but conclusive in their operation.

Thus have I given you a slight sketch of this tissue of *barbarous absurdity*: in which, whether *wanton malice* and *paltry scandal*, or *gross nonsense* and *wilful misrepresentation* predominate, it is difficult to determine.—Having in the course of his letter nearly exhausted his invention, he sums the whole of his rancour in the assertion that "the late pious Vicar soon looked upon *Lukin's* pretences with due contempt." And this concludes the catalogue of *FALSHOOD*: for I declare in direct opposition to your correspondent, that *Mr. W. to the last hour of his life most tenderly compassionated the sufferer*, and ever so effectually befriended him, that he very sensibly at this moment, when the assaults of unprovoked malignity are so cruelly directed against him, feels and laments the loss of his revered benefactor.

Let me therefore advise S. N. whosoever he be, ere he again *exhibit himself* to the public, to rise superior to the little vulgar tales, and silly anecdotes in a village, to distrust in some measure his own vast sagacity and importance, and to provide himself with a small *modicum* of two articles that he seems very much to want at present, COMMON SENSE, and COMMON HUMANITY.

JUSTITIÆ VINDEX.

P. S. July 1.—I am sorry to congratulate S. N. on the success of his malignant insinuations: the poor creature who is the object of them having, *though he continues perfectly free from the fits*, been harassed by the outcry raised against him into a grievous bodily disorder.

To the P R I N T E R.

S I R,

A Vindication of *George Lukins* having been published in the *Bristol Gazette*, by an anonymous Writer, under the prostituted signature of *Justitiæ Vindex*, I must request that in your next you will insert this.

If scurrility, and a total disregard to truth, can deserve attention, then no writer ever had a stronger claim to general notice and credit, than that insignificant declaimer. His motly witticisms are beneath my notice. And his Vindication does not prove a single circumstance, tending to invalidate my narrative, published in the *Bristol Gazette* the preceding week. That *George Lukins* and his Companions were intoxicated at Mr. Love's; and that in consequence of his ebriety only, he fell down at the door, I am assured by several people of good character, who were present.

This circumstance was mentioned to prove the falsehood of the pretence, "that he seemed at the moment of the fall, to have received a blow, from the hand of some person, who as he thought, was allowed thus to punish him, for acting a part in the play." In my narrative, I have noticed several other stories he has told, to account for his unusual tricks. It is well known, that *George Lukins* frequently walked to Bristol, * at times, when, if he had remained at home, his fits would have been expected; and that he returned in a few hours with pitchers of Barm, &c. without the least accident. His fits surely must have been of a curious kind; and the Dæmons which possessed him, very obliging then, and on various other occasions. W. R. W. positively asserted, "that during the influence of his paroxysms, his eyes were fast closed;" but *Vindex* admits, "that being sensible at those times, he sometimes opened them, at the entrance of strange company." With how good grace this is admitted!

What this honest writer represents me to have said concerning *Lukins's* hand is so false, that I beg leave to refer the intelligent reader to my narrative; and he will, I am convinced, be surprised at his confidence. He says, "it is not contended, that the contraction was perpetual. On the contrary, it was uncertain, both in its periods and duration." This is gallantly said by the demure *Vindex*! When I replied to W. R. W. my only wish was to prevent a deception, without exposing the iniquity of the man (who has much disturbed the neighbourhood,) in a greater degree, than would be sufficient, to guard against similar impostors in future.—*Lukins*, during the space of several weeks, continually kept up the appearance of a strong contraction, in all the fingers of one hand, before I put them out straight upon a hand-board: Soon after which, he pretended

* The distance from Yatton to Bristol is about 12 miles.

pretended his thumb was contracted, and obstinately kept it close to the palm of his hand, a long while, till the nail was grown so long, as with its corner, to make a deep impresson in the skin of his hand. This really was the case before I desired Mr. P. when he was sleeping to observe the position of his thumb.

The reason of my direction to Mr. P. must be evident to every reader; but how exultingly does the sapient Vindex detect my weakness; and discover the cause of relaxation during rest? If this Goliath, this mighty man of Gath, be not imposed upon by others, nor lost to all compunctions of conscience, well may he be sick of the cause he has determined to vindicate. The account I gave of *George Lukins*, during his stay in St. George's Hospital, was sent down with him from London; and it was very lately repeated to me, by a gentleman of this Parish. If *Lukins* was possessed by Devils, with what degree of propriety could he be left at home by his relations, with children only? This they have done at the same time of the day, that his fits constantly had been exhibited. He was then visited by four persons of respectability, who were told by him,—“that the fit had altered its course and would not return that night; but that on the morrow and afterwards it would return, at the usual hours.” It may be replied, “he could not have his fit, because there was no one at home to hold him:” but this flimsy excuse will not satisfy the public; though it has sounded well in the ears of weak people. When *Lukins* has been advised to go to church, the mention of church has thrown him into horrible expressions and blasphemy; but when he expected to receive two guineas from the Overseers, to enable him to go to Bristol, to be exorcised, he found no difficulty in attending a Vellry in church. This year, at the annual commemoration of Congressbury Club, *Lukins* went thither, and being discovered by a neighbour, and desired to go out of the church, lest he should disturb the congregation, he replied, “he would stay if he could,” then gaped and distorted his face; but he remained there till the service was ended. How very kind the Dæmons were thus to gratify his curiosity; but probably they themselves love music!

The very important Vindex insinuates that “the Rulers of our Parish have not intrusted this unhappy patient to the tender mercies of my direction.” This his insinuation is equally true, as every position he has advanced, in contradiction to my narrative.—Soon after I settled at Yatton, the Parish officers employed me for him. He has at different times been under my care; and on the eleventh of last January, I was the last time employed by the Overseers for him; but I quickly gave his case up, as unworthy my notice. Here I must beg leave to mention that, some time after the second return of his antics, he accidentally fell and broke both bones of one of his legs.

When I had reduced the fracture, I told him his case did wholly depend upon himself; and that if he did not keep off his fits, many disagreeable consequences were to be apprehended, which I was carefully to point out to him.

He seemed greatly hurt; said he would do the best he could; and I did not hear that he had any fit during his confinement, nor did I, at that time give him any medicines to prevent them.——He was able to walk with the assistance of a stick, in six or seven weeks at most; and the shape of that leg demonstratively proves the good consequences of my admonitions. Soon after he recovered the use of his leg, his complaints were renewed, which he continued a long while. *Lukins's* brother was a very worthy man. His sister-in-law and their relations I feel great respect for: and nothing could induce me designedly to give them just cause of offence. To guard the public against the long since exploded tricks of Jesuits and Popish Priests, I found myself obliged to write a reply to W. R. W. This indeed I was called upon to do, by many respectable characters of this parish, in its vicinity, and in Bristol. Living in the parish of Yatton, the affixing the name of *Samuel Norman* to this, can be of no real importance, as it is presumed the writer would be well known without it: for which reason I shall, as at the bottom of my last, sign the initials only. Happy should I be, could I flatter myself that, the illiberal manner in which *Justitiæ Vindex* has treated me, in his pretended vindication of *G. Lukins*, had been occasioned by the fraudulent deception of some fly malignant knave. A more contemptible vindication could not have been conceived. The defence of a bad cause must ever be most vulnerating. The *Choleric Vindex* has indeed attempted to supply his want of honesty, by far fetched arguments, heavy deductions, low wit, and unmanly abuse. Who is that scribbler? Is he some Knight of the Post, or some Enthusiastic Hireling? A poor thing, who, proud of his own importance, and profound learning, instead of truth or argument, thus insolently publishes the basest, the meanest bombast only? Could the anonymous *Vindex* be dragged out of his den, how fine a figure he would cut! But hid in impenetrable darkness, like a Coward and base Imp, he vainly levels his envenomed shafts at me.

Poor silly *Vindex*, how I pity him! The poor thing is an object too ridiculous to excite my contempt.—*Hudibras* says,

“Your Pettifoggers damn their souls,

“To share with Knaves in cheating Fools.”

But the immaculate *Vindex* is, no doubt, too disinterested to partake with *Lukins*, of the PIOUSLY earned emoluments of his trade. With my whole soul I abhor a hypocrite. I would rather sink in the defence of justice and of truth, than live in the greatest luxury and splendor, by means of sophistry.

I must

I must intreat *Vindex* to recollect, that *honesty* is preferable to *false pride*; and that *profound learning* in a *bad man*, generally tends, to render *him* more consummately contemptible.

Yatton, July 4, 1788.

S. N.

To Mr. W. R. W. of WRINGTON.

FORGIVE me, Sir, if I express my surprise at being informed that the author of the narrative, with the above signature, published in the late Bath and Bristol papers was a WAKE; nor do I believe, that it has been a matter of less astonishment to the generality of those who know you. Though I have a sincere friendship for you, yet I think it a piece of justice you richly deserve, thus publicly to tell you, that your publishing the narrative above referred to, is a disgrace to your understanding, and that it has had a tendency to dishonour the community, of which you are a *teacher*, and *ought to be a defender*.

In support of this assertion, I observe, although you have not said, that the extraordinary circumstances there mentioned, were occasioned by the immediate influence of supernatural agency; yet by the countenance you have given to a late Farce, by your introducing the affair to the notice of the public as preparatory to it, by your asserting, that his distressing situation precluded the suspicion of imposture; you have (like the reverend Gentleman in the celebrated Farce of the Cock-Lane Ghost) acted as midwife to what may now be called the Temple Church Devils. Had you, before you sent your narrative to the press, taken the trouble to procure the most recent and authentic information, I believe you would not have suffered it to have been printed.

You would then have found many reasons to conclude, that if there was not a very great probability, there was at least a possibility of its being in part, if not wholly, an imposture.—What those reasons are, it is not my intention at present to state to you. The most proper place for enquiries of this sort, is of the persons in whose neighbourhood he has so long practised his feats; and to those I refer you; and shall only say that many of those who formerly pitied him, believing it to be a supernatural affliction, are now so far from continuing in that opinion, that they believe it to be in a great measure owing to himself; and his giving way to a nervous, or some other disorder.

That it is a dishonor to the community, of which you ought to be a defender, needs not great ingenuity to point out: for if the Almighty does not willingly afflict, nor chastise the children of men, it is certainly a dishonor to any church for its Ministers to countenance an idea, that he permits pretended witches or dæmons, to torment them at their pleasure.

But the cure it seems is now performed: and I am persuaded that
you

you yourself will not think it to the honor of the Church, when I say, that the apostolic Agents, the Almighty is said to have employed on this wonderful occasion are, a Clergyman educated at a Methodist Seminary, and Six other persons in connection with J. Westley; one of which on a friend of mine asking why Seven Clergymen were not employed in the business, made answer, that *Seven faithful Ministers was the expression the diseased man had made*; and that he scarcely thought there was one, (Mr. E—— excepted) and much less Six more, faithful Clergymen to be found in Bristol; and that, tho' the other Six persons were not ordained by a Bishop, yet they were ordained by God, and had many witnesses or proofs of it in Bristol.

These are the people, for whom *SILLY WOMEN* and *WEAK-MINDED* and *UNINFORMED MEN* leave the Church, and *now* run after as Apostles.

These are the people who, to use the expression of one of their followers, have *now* performed the *first miracle* since the time of our Saviour:

And these are the people, whom, in this pious fraud *you* countenance and support.

ANTIFANATIC.*

Bristol, July 9, 1788.

To the P R I N T E R.

S I R,

THE original publication of *Lukin's* narrative, is by a writer in your last paper, said to be a disgrace to the understanding of the Gentleman from whom it proceeded, and to have a tendency to dishonour the community. If this were the case, I should not endeavour to intercept from that Gentleman any chastisement that might be bestowed upon him; but should leave him to the benefit of his own protection. But neither the publication of the narrative, nor the circumstances that followed it, authorize any unfavourable construction of his conduct. The causes of censure alledged by your correspondent, are the publication of the narrative immediately precedent, and apparently preparative to the performance in Temple Church; the assertion that *Lukins's* distressed situation precluded the suspicion of imposture; the omission to procure recent and authentic information; and the consequences that have ensued from the whole affair, fanatical assumption, and popular delusion.

As to the first censure, I am authorized to declare that the publication of the narrative, as it appeared first in the Bath Chronicle, took place without any knowledge, or even suspicion of the writer, that

Lukins

* This first letter signed Antifanatic, was at that time written by an unknown hand.

Lukins was about to be removed from *Yatton*; much less that the *Methodists* intended to perform their exorcisms upon him. If the writer had possessed such information or intention, one of the *Bristol* papers would have been the proper vehicle for exciting the public notice, as the scene of action was to be in that city. But on the contrary, the narrative was sent to the *Bath* printer near a fortnight before it appeared; two intermediate *Chronicles* were published without it and an apology was made by the printer for the omission. So that as it appears from a paragraph in the last *Bath Chronicle*, the author of the narrative foresaw none of the consequences that followed the insertion; but proposed it to the public at large, as a case apparently curious and remarkable.

That the circumstances of *Lukins's* case amply precluded the suspicion of imposture, is still very certain. The writer of the narrative has passed much of his time in and near the place, and is well acquainted in the neighbourhood; so that he had sufficient opportunity to collect *the most recent and authentic information*. And from *that* he declares, that *Lukins's* case altogether precluded the suspicion of imposture.

As to the consequences that have ensued from the affair, all parties, I think must be sorry for them, the recovery excepted; though it must be remarked, that whether the narrative had appeared or not, the proceedings at Temple Church would have taken place, and been trumpeted forth by those concerned, with the same fanatical exultation.

The narrative, therefore, and its writer, are wholly independent and distinct from the persons and circumstances that have since connected themselves with the subject, the letter having *by mere accident* appeared just before the farce was exhibited in Temple Church; and the author being totally unconcerned with all the performers, and their proceedings.

Redland, July 13.

AMICUS.

To the P R I N T E R.

S I R,

THE writer in a late paper, who has taken the trouble of passing a few remarks on my address to W. R. W. if *really* that man of candour he pretends to be, is certainly deceived in the person he attempts to defend. Had Mr. W.'s conduct been defensible on the honorable grounds of candor and truth, I should have been the last to have pointed out its absurdity or evil tendency. But truth, generosity, common honesty, and even policy, have been equally strangers to the part Mr. W. has taken in this praise-worthy business; a business, the consequence of which, Amicus himself acknowledges, "all parties must be sorry for," and which has been

"trumpeted

“ trumpeted forth by those concerned with fanatical exultations.”

In answer to what he calls my first censure, he says, “ I am authorised to declare, that the publication of the narrative, as it appeared in the Bath Chronicle, took place without any knowledge or even suspicion of the writer, that *Lukins* was about to be removed from *Yatton*; much less that *Methodists* intended to perform their exorcisms upon him.”

Your correspondent does not here venture to deny that his friend had an idea of a future exorcism; but has evidently avoided it by laying the stress on the removal from *Yatton*, and the *Methodists* performing it. This despicable evasion would not have been necessary, nor is it probable it would have been resorted to, but with an intention to screen Mr. W. and mis-lead the public: for the truth is, that *Lukins* when personating the great Devil, had frequently for a considerable time previously to the appearing of the narrative, declared that seven clergymen by praying with him could cure him.

That Mr. W. has lived at Yatton within these few years, and that he has passed much of his time since, sufficiently near that place, to have procured more recent information is readily granted, to the manifest disgrace of his understanding and prudence. It seems to be the principal aim of his defender, (or as I am inclined to think of *himself*, under the signature of *Amicus*) to make it appear that he has had no connection *whatever*, with any of the proceedings that have followed his narrative, or with any of the performers: some assertions to the same effect have also appeared in the Bath Chronicle; inserted, no doubt by his authority. How these assertions can be made to agree with his having a few days after *Lukins* was exorcised, openly defended him in the company of a gentleman, a professor in the University of Oxford, and some other gentlemen in this city, at *Mr. Easterbrook's house*; or how he imagines the above declaration should be attended to or believed by the public, while he shamelessly receives and returns visits even from the exorcists themselves; exceeds the limits of my imagination to conceive. Yet how much more will the public be astonished when I tell them, on the authority of a declaration of the leader of the exorcists, that this same W. R. W. of Wington, is in all probability the writer of those *wile and abusive letters*, sign'd *Justitiæ Vindex*; letters so generally and justly execrated, that they only want the addition of the author's name, to render him *eternally infamous*.

After this delusive conduct to all parties; after thus publicly deserting and denying any concern with his *new-made acquaintance* in different papers; at the same time supporting them under cover of an anonymous signature in another; and carrying on an *intimate and personal* correspondence with them at the place of his abode; after thus abusing the public by taking both sides of a question in order to deceive

deceive and force a ridiculous absurdity upon them, which he is ashamed to support openly : after such conduct, is it possible that any person unless destitute of those feelings and sentiments that dignify man ; can appear before the one without *manifest confusion and remorse* ; or meet the other without a *conscious blush of guilt* upon his countenance.

When the reader views the *duplicity* of this conduct, and considers how contrary it is to what he has a right to expect from so sacred a character as that of a clergyman, I believe he will not think that I used too strong an expression when I told him, *that he had disgraced his understanding and dishonoured his profession.*

ANTI-FANATIC.

Hotwells, July 24, 1788.

To the P R I N T E R.

S I R,

WITHOUT descending to miserable abuse like ANTI-FANATIC, which ever argues a conscious weakness of the cause, I shall extract the marrow of his furious epistle, and reply to that only.

My friend had no idea of a future exorcism by *Methodists*, or others, although he had often heard *Lukins* express his opinion that only the assistance of seven clergymen could give him relief ; but knew not, when he published the case, that there was any intention of making the experiment.

That he defended *Lukins* in the presence of the Professor from the charge of imposture is amply acknowledged ; and that the said Professor admitted his arguments to amount to conviction, is also certain : but that he receives and returns visits from the exorcists themselves, is an absolute falsehood ; * and that he is the writer of the letters signed *Justitiæ Vindex*, (though I think if he were he need not be ashamed of them) I defy ANTI-FANATIC to produce any authority for : as to the vulgar tittle-tattle of S. N. it is too contemptible for notice, and disgraced your very respectable paper.

I am Sir,

Your humble Servant,

AMICUS.

Redland, July 29.

* How curious this subterfuge !

He denies " that he receives and RETURNS visits from the exorcists," though he admits " that he defended Lukins" at Mr. EASTERBROOK'S house, and it is proved in my letter of July 22, (page 30,) that Messrs. Hunt and Westcoat had visited him at HIS OWN HOUSE at Wrington !

D

To

To the P R I N T E R,

S I R,

TO the *hurlothrumb* declamation of the magnanimous S. N. inserted in F. Farley's last journal it is really difficult for me to frame an adequate reply. Not that the argumentative and sensible part of it would require any great compass of understanding fully to refute: that, like *the Iliad*, might repose itself in a nutshell. But to the tropes, the figures, the metaphors, the sublimities that occur throughout, it is not for an ordinary mortal to attempt a replication. I protest, Sir, the magnitude of his ideas, with the elevated pomp of style in which they are arrayed, absolutely confound and surprises me.

Let me then recover awhile from the blaze of eloquence with which this transcendent writer has dazzled my mind, ere I presume to collect any materials that may repel the effulgent flashes of his wit. His page, like Mr. Gibbon's, is so luminous that—pardon the comparison—he is *dark with excess of light*: and soaring into regions far beyond my capacity to contemplate him, leaves me at humble distance, rapt in mute extacy and adoration.

Can it then be expected Sir, that a genius, thus rising upon eagle's wings, should stoop either to the wretched task of confirming his own assertions, or even pinning his aspiring intellect down to plain fact and grovelling truth? No, Sir, it cannot: I therefore release this sublime writer from any such paltry obligation. It shall rest upon his own omnipotent *ipse dixit*,—for he has adduced no proof but *hear-say*—that *Lukins* was intoxicated at the beginning of his fits; and we will not presume to enquire—far be it from us, Sir—of what possible advantage this concession can prove, towards accounting for the maladies that near 18 years and a half afflicted him.

We must also yield, as in duty bound, that *Lukins*, in the intervals of his fits, frequently walked to and from *Bristol*, without the least accident; and because he luckily got home safe without breaking his neck, we must admit that he never had fits by the way. But, in my humble understanding, those fits afforded no cause of suspicion which equally attacked the sufferer, whether at home or on the road. And perceive you, gentle reader, any inconsistency in saying that his eyes were fast closed during the paroxysms, and yet that being sensible of what passed, he sometimes opened them on hearing a noise, &c. ? When shall I prevail on this gentleman to descend to plain common sense? A natural philosopher describing the effects of sleep, very innocently says,—During its influence, the eyes are fast closed, but an uncommon noise will awaken the sleeper, and occasion him to open them—"Oho," quoth a merry fellow ever on the watch to entrap this poor devil of a teacher, "here I have caught you. Just now, you positively asserted that the eyes during sleep were fast closed; and now you pretend to say that when a noise is heard, they will open. What a fool of a philosopher!"

If

If I could comprehend the exact meaning of this writer, it might be in my power to give him a proper answer. But he eludes my penetration. He says that "*Lukins* much disturbed the neighbourhood in a greater degree than would be sufficient to guard against familiar impostures in future." If you, Mr. Printer, can even guess at the meaning of this sentence you are a much wiser man than I am. But perhaps you have a glimpse of what he would be at when he declares in nervous language, that "the defence of a bad cause must ever be most *vulnerating*." I wish for his own credit, he had not left himself so *vulnerable*. Truth and argument it were unreasonable to require of him: but surely I have a right to expect common sense and intelligible language.

To the former I cannot refer his reasoning on the contraction of *Lukins'* thumb. He allows that it was "strongly contracted, and that the nail grew so long as to make "a deep impression" in the skin of *Lukins'* hand. Shall I remind S. N. of the actual circumstances attending this *deep impression*; that *Lukins'* thumb became so firmly fixed into the *Palm* of his hand, as to generate corruption, which absolutely rendered him offensive. Is here any sign of imposture? to be disabled from working at his trade? in following which S. N. himself cannot deny him the praise of industry, any more than he can tarnish the excellent and spotless character he has ever maintained!

S. N. learnedly but somewhat inaccurately alleges that I have discovered the cause of relaxation during rest. If I had, I should look upon myself as approximating very fast to the excellence of S. N. himself. But let me confine his eccentricity to the real assertion; which was, that it was the nature of sleep to produce a relaxation of the system.

He says that he has given the same account of *Lukins* that was sent down with him from the hospital. I ask S. N. positively, whether that account was written, and official, proceeding from the faculty of the hospital; and if so, whether it stated *Lukins* to have been free from his fits, during the whole time that he was a patient there? but what truth can be expected from a man, who in praise of his own vast abilities, and in corroboration of his own prejudices, has not scrupled to publish a rank falsehood, in the stupid account of two persons, whom he pretends, fell into the same fits as *Lukins* after having seen him in them? As to the man, he is ready to attest upon oath, and his mistress will *solemnly affirm*, that he never suffered any ill effects from seeing *Lukins* in those situations, and that though the Dr. has of late so unmercifully vomited him in the page of a newspaper, he never swallowed an emetick, *mild nor furly, neither any physick whatsoever*, prescribed by S. N. in the whole course of his life! Such an undaunted assertor we may permit to trumpet forth his own harmless applause; but must hear with contemptuous ridicule his little vulgar tales of clubs and vestries; which, suppo-

sing them to be true, only prove—what has never been denied—that the fits came on at uncertain intervals. And as the disorder was most likely mental as well as corporal, pray what improbability is there in supposing that the influence of the mind might now and then have checked or varied the appearance of the fits? But that all was not feigned I think must be evident even from the confession of S. N. himself: for no man, I conceive, would for meer amusement *break both the bones of one of his legs!* but this event came to pass, I suppose, in conformity to the humane directions of the great S. N. who himself tells us that he used to counsel the people to let him *trample on the fire, or run into the river!* And suppose he had no fit whilst he was confined for this accident: is it impossible that the anguish of his sufferings—*especially under the prudent management of S. N.*—might not for a time overcome the fits, and that as his pain went off, they might return? But are we to take S. N.'s word that he had no fit all this time? I am afraid not. For behold how cautiously he delivers himself. He says not, as I presume he would have gladly said if he could, that Lukins had no fit during his confinement, but, “I did not learn that he had any.”—*Bravo Doctor!*

Well now we see the vanity of all human science, and the fallibility of the greatest men! Even the illustrious S. N. had this patient under his care at different times for the last 18 years. But you are not to suppose that he could do nothing for him, or that he could not have cured him if he would. No, no: he “gave up” the patient’s case, only as being “unworthy of notice;” that is to say, unworthy the notice of so capital a performer as himself. For certainly to descend to the cure of a poor wretch who had been a long time subject to such a perplexing disorder, would have been the very extreme of degradation. However it appears that S. N. was not quite satisfied yet that the case was unworthy his notice; for he acknowledges that he attacked the patient again in last January; but with what success—seems to be *unworthy our notice.*

In the conclusion, the sublime S. N. vauntingly saith, that I am an object too ridiculous to excite his contempt. But how any object can be too ridiculous to excite *that sensation*, I own I cannot conceive. The more ridiculous an object is, the *greater portion* of contempt it should excite. But this is one of his grand *hyperboles*. His mind laboured to express in poignant words the idea, how abundantly he despised me; and by way of saying that he entertained a consummate contempt for me, he declares that I have excited no contempt *at all*. But I am apt to believe that a man who winces so confoundedly as he evidently does, under the chastisement conferred upon him, must have felt some sensation *infinitely keener than contempt*; and cannot help suspecting, when I see such pompous declinations on the beauty of virtue, that they are calculated only to cover the deformity of vice.

July 14, 1788.

JUSTITIAE VINDEX.

The

The private Letter to Mr. Wake, mentioned in the Introduction.

Yatton, July 21, 1788.

Rev. Sir,

I ACQUAINT you, that unless a handsome apology be made me this week, in all the Bristol News-Papers, for the illiberal calumnies which the writer of *Justitiæ Vindex* has published concerning me, I shall be obliged, though reluctantly to publish such accumulated evidence of his conduct in Lukins's affair, as will not fail to be very disagreeable. Whatever you may think, I assure you, this notice proceeds from remaining impressions of past friendship.

I am with all due respect, your's, &c.

S. NORMAN.

The Rev. Mr. Wake, Wrington.

THE REPLY.

Wrington, Monday, July 21, 1788.

S I R,

I AM astonished at your effrontery, in demanding of me an apology for the letters of *Justitiæ Vindex*, especially as you have thought proper to reply to that writer. You may assure yourself that I shall make no sort of apology for what he has addressed to you, and you may likewise depend upon it, that if you dare to make use of my name, directly or indirectly, in any of the public prints, I will so severely retort upon your conduct, as shall make you seriously repent of your indiscretion. At the same time, I freely own I have no enmity against you; and retaining, as well as yourself the impressions of past friendship, shall regret the necessity, if you impose it, of publicly defending myself, and annoying my antagonist in the most effectual manner I am able.

I am, Sir, with due respect, your's. &c.

W. R. WAKE.

Mr. Norman, Yatton.

To the P R I N T E R.

S I R,

MAN deprived of the pleasure and advantage of society would be most unhappy. The light of nature teaches the obligations of sincerity, candour, truth. The interest of mankind, if duly attended to, would be a sufficient inducement to every intelligent mind, to pursue the ways of peace.

But early prejudices, evil examples, and unsteady wayward passions, in all ages, have too much influenced men's actions; and without the glorious light of the gospel, would more commonly have perverted the benevolent purposes of omniscient goodness and mercy. Revelation

relation teaches and enforces the necessity of peace and goodwill among men. It exhibits the most brilliant inducements to virtue, and promulgates the most glorious rewards to the obedient. It is the interest and duty of every individual to study and obey its precepts; and of every TEACHER of every denomination of christians, to explain and inculcate its doctrines, promises, and admonitions. When the man of God does this, when a minister acts up to his duty, he deservedly claims our regard, and respect: and he has the animating assurance that he shall not only save his own soul, but those that hear him. I have been led to the foregoing observations, by the consideration of the shameless misrepresentations practised against me by the anonymous *Justitiæ Vindex*. The foul attacks that writer has made upon my character and reputation, must rebound ten fold upon himself.

I have not offered one consideration to the public, respecting *Lukins's* case; which is not true. This I pledge myself to prove in its due place, to the intire satisfaction of every impartial mind. But Sir, as I have given my name to the public, I have a right to expect that the cowardly veil of black obscurity shall be thrown aside; and that the pious writer of *Justitiæ Vindex's* letters will publish his address. To obtain this end, I ask Mr. Wake of Wrington, if he is not the author of the letter signed W. R. W.? I ask him if he ever believed that *George Lukins* was possessed by Devils? I ask him, if he is not the author of *Justitiæ Vindex's* letters? I ask him if the person mentioned in my reply to W. R. W. to have assumed the appearance of *George Lukins's* fits, when he was a servant to Mr. John Young, was not with him on the 11th 12th or 13th of this month? I ask him, if he did not promise that fellow, to publish his denial of what I asserted concerning him, in my reply to W. R. W.? To these questions I think myself intitled to plain unequivocal answers. To cut off all pretences on the part of that good man, of bare assertion without proof on my part, I beg leave to produce my authorities, for the questions I have put to Mr. Wake.

First then, it is generally admitted, that Mr. Wake is the author of the letter introducing *Lukins's* case to public notice, signed W. R. W.

Secondly. The very style of the letters, with the signature of *Justitiæ Vindex* affixed, clearly shews its author.

Thirdly. I am well informed that one of the actors † in the collusive dæmonical dispossession, was with Mr. Wake, a very short time only before the first letter with the signature of *Justitiæ Vindex* was published.

Fourthly, James Rodford, who lived at Mr. Young's, and whose case I mentioned, abused me grossly to Mr. Atherton of this parish, on Friday the 11th instant, and said he would go to Mr. Wake, and tell

† Mr. Hunt accompanied by Mr. Westcoat:—These gentlemen declared at Wrington, "that they had been at Mr. Wake's house, and that he treated them in a very respectful manner."

tell him that he had not at any time taken any medicine of my directing.

Fifthly. Mrs. Young, Mr. Young, and Frances Parker of this Parish, all assure me, that James Rodford told them, on Sunday the 13th instant, that he had been with Mr. Wake, at Wrington, for the purpose above mentioned;—That Mr. Wake asked him if he would attest the truth of his account upon oath, and if he was willing to have it put into the News-papers. It is farther to be observed, that in walking through this Parish on the same day, Rodford exultingly told Mr. Plaister, in the hearing of Thomas Gooding, that “as the Doctor had begun a work he must go through it how he could.” And lastly, Mr. Smith of Yatton heard Mr. Wake declare, “that if any one disputed his account of *Lukins’s* case, he would vindicate what he had written;” and also that “he could write as bitter as any man.” These were the meek, the judicious declarations of the pious vicar of Backwell! *George Lukins*, on Saturday the 20th instant, rode to Bristol, in Edward Jones’s cart: about the middle of the day *Lukins*, || told Jones, that he had been to Mr. Easterbrook’s house; and that he was to go thither again, in the afternoon, with James Rodford. Jones, in his way home to Yatton, saw both *Lukins* and Rodford, at Bedminster, at *Lukins’s* lodgings. The last letter signed *Justitiæ Vindex*, having appeared, before this visit of Rodford’s to Mr. Easterbrook, proves, that that gentleman was not the author of the aforesaid letters. I long to see Rodford’s deposition; and I sincerely hope, it will be so drawn up, as to give it, its due power.

Thus Sir, I think I have given you substantial reasons, for believing Mr. Wake to be the author of the three letters in question; and I flatter myself, that the public will think me entitled to a candid reply from him.

Well knowing his abilities, I wait his defence. A *reverend divine* surely will not prevaricate; malevolent scandal will form no part of his answer; and the *learned and good man* will shine conspicuously in every part of the composition.

Yatton, July 22, 1788.

S. N.

To S N.

WHY, Dr. my last letter seems to have thrown you quite into a fit of morality. I never heard, nor I believe, any of your acquaintance, so many sentences of gravity, piety, nay and religion too proceed from your mouth; and if one could but find out the

|| *Lukins* since his pretended recovery, and during his stay in Bristol, sent several packets to Mr. Wake at Wrington: he returned from Bristol Saturday the 12th, waited on Mr. Wake at Wrington Friday the 18th, and set off again for Bristol the next day.

the propriety and pertinence of their introduction, I declare they would be admirable !

But, my good Dr. why will you not descend from those aerial sublimities which absolutely render you incomprehensible ? why will you not do justice to your own meaning, by writing plain English ? You tell us you will substantiate your charges *to the satisfaction of every partial mind*. Now I think you meant the very reverse :—but truth is a more stubborn thing than you are aware of ; and I am afraid it will be only on those minds which are already prejudiced and *partial* to your cause, that you will be able to make any impression.

Verily, Dr. if any thing advanced by you were capable of doing a man an injury, I should, pity the poor Vicar of Backwell, on whom with such a heavy hand you have fulminated your reproaches. But it is generally observable, my dear Dr. that where providence finds a black malignant heart, it counterbalances the mischief by endowing the agent with a mean share of intellect ; that the animal may be disabled from prosecuting its insidious purposes with any success. So that, my good Sir, as *laudari a laudato viro* is one of the most desirable things in life, the converse of the proposition, *ab illaudato vituperari* is no bad recommendation of a man's character : and you know in your own heart, Dr. that you are precisely one of those, “ whose praise is censure ; and whose censure, praise.”

As to the Vicar of Backwell I have nothing farther to say of him than to congratulate him on having encountered your indignation : for that is a certain sign, *to all who know you*, that he has done something or other compatible with common sense or humanity ; and I should begin to feel for him very sensibly, if he were cursed with your approbation.

July 29.

JUSTITIÆ VINDEX.

To W. R. W. of Wrington.

WHY Parson, the last letter of S. N. relative to Lukins seems to have hurted even your delicacy. He is indeed one of those awkward writers, who confines his arguments to stubborn facts ; who thinks, that an honest man cannot engage in a bad cause ; and would not be ashamed of a good one. To those who are righteous over much, to every sanctimonious Judas, an open, a candid conduct must ever be grating. Who then can wonder, that those principles of morality and religion, which S. N. in his last, briefly stated for your consideration, should be so wounding to such a professor of religion, to a creature whose conduct in every part of Lukins's business is a disgrace to his profession, a reproach to society, and a scandal to human nature ? The facts which S. N. has published are well known to the whole neighbourhood, and cannot be perverted by the iniquitous shuffling and prevarication of W. R. W. So sensible are you of the truth of this assertion, that you have not even attempted

attempted to answer a single question S. N. put to you in his last letter, nor dared to deny any of the arguments he adduced to support them.

This letter which S. N. sent to the Printer, to be inserted in his Paper of the 26th ult. was correct, but four errors of the press crept into it.

In that letter, the writer pledged himself to prove to the intire satisfaction of every impartial mind, that he had not offered one consideration to the public respecting Lukins, which was not true; and I am convinced he will fulfil his engagement. You allow Mr. Parson, "that where providence finds a black malignant heart, it counterbalances the mischief by endowing the agent with a mean share of intellect, that the animal may be disabled from prosecuting its insidious purposes with any success." With respect to yourself, the truth of this observation cannot be controverted. Your letters fallaciously signed *Justitiæ Vindex*, are so replete with scandalous abuse, palpable misrepresentations and contradictions, that the public are in no danger of being deceived by your wicked endeavours. Your pride, arrogance, and folly have brought you into a worse dilemma, than even any enemy could wish you.

Justly buried in obscurity, you, was resolved to write yourself into notice. You would be great, but unfortunately (like as an ass between two bundles of hay would starve, not knowing which to make choice of,) by endeavouring to deceive the reasonable part of mankind, and slyly to support the enthusiastic, in the controversy you have conjured up about Lukins, you have deservedly incurred the contempt of all good men.

At the same time that you have been the support of fanaticism, and trampled upon the Canons of the Church, by your writings and advice; you have by newspaper paragraphs, letters * and oral declarations, publicly denied having had any thing to do, since your introductory letter, with the subsequent proceedings of the Methodists and Lukins; or having held any correspondence with any of the parties concerned in the exorcism.† But whoever will give themselves the trouble to read the last letter of S. N. will find such strong, such positive proofs of the fallacy of your pretences, as cannot fail to convince them of your duplicity. You know Parson, that in the estimation of some, the subtillest of hypocrites and worst of sinners make the best of Saints. Well then, may our very humane, our very worthy Vicar hope to be, and the elect rejoice to see him consecrated, the head of the Chapel, the British Pope!

E

I would

* Two letters in the public papers signed Amicus.

† What uniformity is there in every thing this man says? It is well known that Mr. Wake, has sent several letters to Mr. Easterbrook since the public exhibition of the Temple Church Devils, with particular directions to the carrier to deliver them himself; and that he justified the pious exorcism, in a debate at that gentlemen's house, by declaring that Lukins's was not a medical case.

I would yet give you saving counsel, kiss the rod, repent and sign thy recantation, O thou Priest ! But if you will pertinaciously persist, and must call hard names in future, be so honest as to do it in plain English, and avow yourself in your true colours.

PHILOPATRIS.

YATTON, *August 6, 1788.*

CONCLUSION.

C O N C L U S I O N.

TH E discussion of George Lukins's complaints having been carried to a great length, it is I think necessary to bring it to a conclusion. The more readily to do this, and to avoid any misconception, the reader is informed, that the same person is the author of the introductory letter of Lukins's case to the public, signed W. R. W. and the subsequent letters, with the signature of *Justitiæ Vindex*.

Besides these signatures, the same good man is supposed occasionally to have subscribed *Amicus* in the public papers. This writer having denied, that Lukins or any of the young men were intoxicated at Mr. Love's, in the Christmas holidays, in the later part of the year 1769 or beginning of 1770, and called upon me to substantiate my assertion, I comply with his challenge and produce my vouchers.

First then M. G. one of the actresses, declares the company were all intoxicated by ten of the clock, when she and her female companion left them at Mr. Love's. Secondly I am told by William Avery and Thomas Read, who acted separate parts in the Christmas play, that they went early in the evening with George Lukins, and many others, for the purpose, and at the time above mentioned; that having performed their mummeries, Mr. Love kept them at his house till very late that night, and pressed them closely with bottled strong beer; that they were all intoxicated; in so much that one of them was thrown into a severe illness; that all drank alike; and that Lukins in particular, was greatly inebriated. As the company was going home, Lukins fell down at the door; he was helped up; and his two next door neighbours, Avery and Read, with difficulty led him home; the state of their heads being but little better, than of his.

The street was scarcely wide enough for them ; and Lukins in his way home bawled out several times, as drunken men are wont to. This then is the testimony of three people as valuable and as honest as W. R. W. But that my *pious* opponent may be convinced, out of several others who know the truth of this relation, I select the name of a man, whose probity and honor would be a good pattern for W. R. W. to copy after ; I mean Mr. William Bristow. He gives me the same account of that nights Business.

In the narrative of W. R. W. we read—" He declares in a roaring voice that he is the Devil, who with many horrid execrations summons about him certain persons devoted to his will, and commands them to torture this unhappy patient." Again he says—" the patient sings in a different voice a jovial hunting song, which having received the approbation of the *foul fiend*, is succeeded by a song in female voice ; and this is followed at the particular injunction of the dæmon, by a pastoral song sung by, and in the real character of the patient himself." He farther says—" the dæmon, then concludes the ceremony, by declaring his unalterable resolution to punish him for ever." Now according to this writer the Devil summons and commands. But whom then does he summon and command ? Why truly " certain Persons devoted to his will." Who were those Persons ? Were W. R. W, and his *reverend* Brethren, the " Persons devoted to the Devils will" ? As a profound scholar, a first rate casuist, I hope W. R. W. will make those " certain Persons" publickly and generally known.

In some few days after Lukins was said to be exorcised, a reputable person of this Parish met W. R. W, at Cleve, and talked with him upon that subject. Our *consistent Divine* wished he had been previously acquainted with that business, and declared he would have been present. From the general tenor of his narrative, as cited above ; and from this declaration, it is natural to conclude, that W. R. W. really believed Lukins was possessed by Devils ; and that they were absolutely ejected out of him : But upon different occasions, and in diverse companies, he has declared, that he never believed Lukins was possessed. Paragraphs have been inserted in the public prints to exculpate him from any censure on that score ; and under the signature of Amicus he has virtually condemned the exorcism.— For what purpose then did he attempt to deceive the World ? Was it to get another petition for Lukins, and share with him in the profit ? Or was it to force himself into notice at the expence of decency, truth and religion ? Let it never be forgotten, that it was the *humane* the *faithful* Vicar of Backwell, who has thus occasioned and *thus righteously* supported *this pious* business ! W. R. W. asserts that " at certain periods of the fit, he is so violent that an assistant is always

always obliged to be at hand, to restrain him from committing some injury on himself : though to the Spectators he is perfectly harmless."

I would advise W. R. W. when he writes next, to pay some little regard to consistency and not to advance such palpable falsehood.—When Lukins's relations held him, he appeared determined to injure himself ; but when any rational person has insisted upon holding him, and would permit him to run into a pool, or kick at the fire, and rather press him toward them, he hath uniformly kept himself at a safe distance : and I find that for similar detections he hath given several people fly blows about the Stomach.. Several years since, when Lukins's Brother was living, J—n Sh—r—n of this Parish, on a Sunday evening, after divine service went to see him. He soon began to dance about the House, S—r—n immediately seized him by the hands, and held him fast. Lukins finding he could not extricate himself, maliciously aimed a kick at Sh—r—n, so as to ruin him : but prudently inclining himself to one side, he caught Lukins's foot between his knees ; and exasperated at the villainy, forced him to the other side of the Room, to put him down in a chair. Lukins fixed his shoulders against the wall and S—r—n could not bend his body ; but he instantly kicked up his heels, threw him into the chair, and frightened away his pretended fits. Lukins's Brother being a humane man desired Sh—r—n not to squeeze him. Such mistaken kindness has contributed not a little to confirm the impostor.

Though in his antics he was wont to fall down upon the floor, he has always taken due care by letting himself down easily with one hand, not to injure himself. He would then terrify weak people, by pretending to strike his head against the floor. He was generally prudent enough however, to strike his head against the foot of one of his relations. But when his friends could be prevailed upon to stand off, I am told by people of undoubted veracity, that boys in their play often strike their heads harder against the ground. When he wished to kick the ceiling, if either of the parties in that instant let go an arm, to deprive him of support, he would immediately with the loosened hand save himself from falling, so as to injure himself. Or if in the exhibition of his feats, he was ready to begin upon violent throws of his arms, he was generally careful, so to place his chair, as to be safe from injury, from the furniture, or wall.

But I have heard of one or two instances when he hath not placed his chair far enough from the beaureau ; and having struck his arm against the slide, he cursed bitterly, and removed his chair, a first and second time, farther from it. Last spring four gentlemen (one of them a clergyman) went to see him perform.

form. He began throwing about his arms in a violent manner : but striking an ironing box with his hand, he discovered strong indications of Pain, looked at the box, and carefully avoided the like accident afterwards.

Except when he pretended to be speechless, he has during his exertions, howlings, singing and gesticulations, at all times, readily and sensibly replied to questions proposed to him. He very frequently consulted the clock, when people of discernment have been to see him, antecedent to the foreknown periodical approach of his manœuvres and some few minutes before that time, set himself in his chair, in order for his exhibitions.

If any one resisted and squeezed him during any part of his performances, he would instantly reproach him with the acutest acerbity and curse him vehemently. In one of his fits the door was bolted, but being told that a friend wished to see him he opened it himself.

It is evident therefore that he retained all his senses, at all times equally, whether in the pretended paroxysms, or in the intervals of them. So that the opinion notwithstanding of one or two superannuated gentlemen, it is evident, that he was not afflicted with the Epilepsy, or any one symptom compatible with the known appearances of that disorder.

For the Epilepsy is defined, a convulsion, or convulsive motion of the whole body, or some of its parts, with a privation of sense,

That anxiety, delirious restlessness, boldness, fury, and violent unnatural bodily motions, were wanting on one hand ; as were the watchful solicitude, incoherency, oppressive languor and timidity, on the other, to justify the belief of this being a maniac. It is however equally reasonable to believe, that he was as much visited by either or both of those disorders, as by any bodily disorder whatever.

Lukins has very generally enjoyed sound health ; was not more emaciated when he went to Bristol to be exorcised, than he has at all times been since I have known him ; and he eat as heartily, and slept as well then, as most of his neighbours. Yet the *pious* W. R. W. says, that “ the emaciated and exhausted figure he represents, the number of years he has been subject to this malady, and the prospect of want and distress that lies before him, all preclude the suspicion of imposture.” It is remarkable, notwithstanding *these pretences*, that Lukins walked very fast to Bristol to be cured, and that he told Mr. S. D. W. who rode with him some way, “ that he had faith to believe he should be cured at Bristol, if he could get seven clergymen to pray with him in faith ; but that they also must have faith, or else they could not cure him.” This was the same mode of cure he talked of his antics, when personating the great Devil. Our old fashion divines and old fashion people, even our Lord and his Apostles represent Satan as the subtillest of Spirits : but our *new fan-*
gled

gled reverend gentlemen prove him to be *so great a fool*, as to teach his disciples how to detect and over reach *himself*! Mr. Lukins's pertinacious iniquity had opened the eyes of the principal people of the parish; and he was become too burdensome to hope for support, from the care and industry of his sister-in-law. Under these circumstances he applied to the parish for constant pay, with which he had before been but too much indulged. The managers of our Parish were too wise to grant his petition; and he was reduced to the necessity of thinking of some descent contrivance, to cover his abominable iniquities, and get a pretended cure of complaints, which never had any real existence. He found his Dupes and gulled them. His *reverend* and *pious protector* and *adviser* as he introduced Lukins case to public notice, would have laughed at our Priests Militant, and justified the cheat. We are told by W. R. W.—“That every effort of some very ingenious gentlemen of the faculty, who applied their serious attention to his case, has been long ago and recently exerted without success.” Some few weeks before he went to Bristol to be exorcised, Messrs. Box and James of Wrington and Jardine of Bristol, Surgeons, went to see Lukins; they were restrained by one of his relations from treating him as they wished; and Mr. Box has authorised me to declare, that he looks upon George Lukins to have been a great Impostor. In my narrative I said that after he was admitted a patient into St. George's Hospital, he never had a fit in that house. My antagonist in his Vindication of Lukins replies—“But from bold unqualified assertion and from seeming arguments let us resort to plain truth: and the plain truth is, that Lukins was troubled with fits *through the whole time*, at different intervals of his residence in that hospital; that he was desirous of being seen under their influence by the faculty; and that none of them the house surgeon excepted even saw him in those situations.” This same writer in his answer to W. H. R. says—“the *poor creature* was afflicted with fits, during the *whole period*, and that he was obliged *at his own expence*, to hire a man for the purpose of sustaining him in them.”*

How impudent are these aspersions by *Justitiæ Vindex*, upon the characters of the gentlemen of the faculty, belonging to St George's Hospital! To pretend that a man, known to be afflicted “with violent fits, convulsions and paroxysms of nature,” in that hospital, was neglected by the faculty in those horrible moments; though he was desirous of being seen by them; is so gross an insult to the understanding of the reader, and abominable reproach to the faculty, of one of the best regulated and most humanely conducted hospitals in the world, as no man possessed of a grain of modesty or honesty could have published.

Or

* These letters are omitted as not containing any thing necessary to our purpose which is not in the other letters.

Or who can believe that Lukings would have been permitted to pay an assistant for sustaining him in his fits, in that hospital, who knows that it is a positive, a standing law in all hospitals, that *the patient shall be attended free of expence, and that a breach of this regulation would occasion the dismissal of both the patient and the assistant?*

On account of Lukins's fits, the parish employed William Avery to attend him to London: but no person was appointed to return with him; because he was reported to be cured of his fits. His antics periodically returned, the whole way thither; and as Lukins prognosticated would long continue.

When he was before the board of physicians and governors according to the usual course of his complaints, the fits were to be expected but to Avery's great astonishment he remained free from them. I have received a letter from a medical gentleman of high rank, in which he writes, "I perfectly remember Lukins being admitted into St. George's Hospital; and that I occasionally visited him during his stay in the house; and I cannot call to mind, my ever seeing him in a fit whilst under the physicians care."

Mr. Norman, Surgeon of Langport, entered at a pupil, at St. George's, about two or three weeks before Lukins was dismissed. After the most diligent enquiry, he could not learn, that Lukins had ever played off his antics there; but he was informed that his case was unworthy the notice of the faculty; and that he was considered as an impostor; but by reason of a pretended lameness, which he had always assumed in that house, he was dismissed as incurable. The following certificate published by Messrs. Rudhall and Co. in their Bristol Journal of the 26th of July last is to the same purpose.

S I R S.

St. George's Hospital, July 18 1788.

I received the favour of yours, which I am sorry I could not answer so early as you wished, owing to the pains I have taken to ascertain the enquiries you made, in which, however, my success has not been equal to my intention. In looking over the books, I find that a person of the name of George Lukins was admitted into the Hospital in May 1775, and was discharged incurable in October following. As to his disease nothing can be found to lead to a discovery what it was, as it was not the custom to register the diseases, and the letter on which it was mentioned has long since been destroyed. Mr. Dampier the Apothecary (at whose desire I write this letter) the Chaplain and the Surgery man were belonging to the Hospital at that time, and neither of them recollect any thing like the circumstances mentioned by you; so that I apprehend the whole will appear a palpable imposture. Should be happy to communicate any thing on that subject, which might lead to the full detection of such complicated guilt; but it is not in my power.

I am Sirs, Your very humble Servant,
JOHN GOLD Secretary.

Is there a man in the world, is it possible to produce a man so stupid as to believe, that the Chaplain of the Hospital, the Apothecary who lives in that Hospital, attends the patients daily, and on every extraordinary occasion; and the Surgery-man, could neither of them recollect any thing of Lukins's most abominable and horrible antics, if he ever exhibited them in that house?

I must pronounce such forgetfulness impossible. The strong impression of tricks so odious and unnatural, could never be obliterated from a rational mind. William Avery was directed to tell the faculty at the Hospital, that Lukins's was a *nervous case*. Sometime before he went to London, he had assumed the appearance of a contracted leg. He kept up familiar appearances there, and continued them a considerable length of time after his return. For this complaint, he was dismissed the Hospital, as *incurable*.

As his complaints were neither real nor ideal, but only iniquitously assumptive, medicine produced no beneficial effect upon him; and his deep dissimulation effected that purpose, which his iniquitous schemes caused him to hope for. My antagonist in his vindication of Lukins says, "all impostures are projected with some design; and the purpose of the *Cock Lane Ghost* was discovered to be mercenary." This cannot be doubted, and fully explains the views of Mr. Vindex. He hoped, no doubt, upon the departure of honest John, the present incumbent, to succeed to the Episcopacy of the Chapel, the infallibility of the British Pope. In the mean time, a few *trifling douceurs* for his *becoming zeal* from the *Elect*, would feel very comfortable, and give great importance to our parsons pocket. In my narrative I observed speaking of Lukins "his next subterfuge was a pretended contraction of his thumb". My *very honest* antagonist, in his vindication, misrepresents what I said, and adds, "it is not contended that the contraction was perpetual: on the contrary, it was uncertain both in its periods and duration." I replied that "he pretended his thumb was contracted, and obstinately kept it close to the palm of his hand, a long while, &c. To this he has *very modestly* answered, "shall I remind S. N. of the actual circumstances attending this *deep impression*, that Lukins's thumb became so firmly fixed *into the palm* of his hand, as to generate corruption, which absolutely rendered him offensive." So that according to this writer, tho' the contraction was not perpetual; and though it was uncertain in its periods and duration; yet his thumb became so firmly fixed into the palm of his hand, as to generate corruption and render him offensive. This is one of the *trifling* inconsistencies of W. R. W. Blush O ye reverend divines at the consummate effrontery of your *very important* brother! It may not be amiss in this place to inform the reader, that some years since, Lukins kept a little shop; for which purpose he hired a room of a gardener of this parish. In the absence of the man and his wife, and at a time when he pretended to have a strong contraction of his hand, he was

by the fire side, with his hand unclinch'd; but quickly after the good woman opened the door, he clinch'd his hand, retired to his shop, and wrapped it up in flannel as before.

Mr. Vindex in his introductory letter says, that "during the influence of his paroxysms, his eyes are fast clos'd" to my answer that he took care to peep or sily squint at his wife visitors;—W. R. W replied,—“His eyes were undoubtedly in general fast clos'd during his fits; but as he us'd to be perfectly sensible at those times. (reader observe in his violent fits, convulsions, and paroxysms of nature, Lukins was perfectly sensible!) it is no wise proof of imposture that he sometimes opened them at the entrance of strange company”. (So we find that the Devils were very curious to know, and no doubt were greatly obliged to their *wife* visitors.) And in his third letter he facetiously writes, “and perceive you gentle reader, any inconsistency in saying that his eyes were fast clos'd during the paroxysms, and yet that being sensible of what pass'd, he sometimes opened them on hearing a noise, &c.”? It appears to me, that there is same difference between a man's eyes being fast clos'd, and wide the open, as there is between a blind man, and a man who sees distinctly. But to follow our logical writer, in his wise exemplification of his argument, would be to trespass upon the patience of the reader, and for this reason I shall only observe to our *natural* philosopher, “that upon *his own* principles, as a man when sleeping is disturbed by an uncommon noise, and awaking opens his eyes; so Lukins disturb'd by hearing a noise opened his Eyes, and ought to have recovered from his fits. But the sapient Vindex while writing his admirable visions, never dream'd of the recollection, or judgemnt of his gentle reader.

In my narrative I declared that “our late pious vicar soon look'd upon Lukins's pretences with due contempt: “but my *honest* opponent asserts that” this concludes the catalogue of *falsehoods*.

Mr. Wake our late vicar, in conversations with me, spake of Lukins irascibly: but with mature consideration ask'd, what can be done? His brother is a very worthy man, and is greatly injured by him; and we cannot without hurting the brother, shew him resentment: and upon this principle it was that Mr. Wake extended his benevolence towards him. A. Wife of S. H. lived two years with Mr. Wake and was the greatest part of her time at his house during the remaining eight years of his life. They say he always treated the idea of Lukins's being influenced by Witches or Devils with anger, & thought a horsewhip would do him most good.

But to open the eyes of the deluded our excellent minister preach'd a sermon upon Isaiah, Chap. viii; ver. 19, 20. This serves, to shew the ability of that good man, and the *great regard* paid to truth by his *prudent nephew*. But a man who could report a *healthy* man as being “harrass'd into a greivous bodily disorder,” for the sinister purpose of stimulating the misplaced principles of humanity

humanity in favor of an impostor, to prejudice the cause of truth, is a disgrace to his profession and deserves not credit. In my answer to the Vindication of Lukins, I said,—“when I replied to W. R. W. my only wish was to prevent a deception, without exposing the iniquity of the man, (who has so much disturbed the neighbourhood,) in a greater degree than would be sufficient to guard against similar impostors in future.” He replied.—“If I could comprehend the exact meaning of this writer, it might be in my power to give him a proper answer. But he eludes my penetration. He says that Lukins much disturbed the neighbourhood in a greater degree than would be sufficient to guard against similar impostors in future.” If my antagonist was as foolish, as he was mean and shuffling, the principles of compassion would have been his best protection, from that chastisement, which his iniquitous misrepresentations and duplicity have justly brought down on him.

Our modest Mr. Vindex asks “what truth can be expected from a man, who has not scrupled to publish a rank falsehood, in the stupid account of two persons, &c. “As to the man he is ready to attest upon Oath, and his mistress will solemnly affirm that he never swallowed an emetic, *mild nor surly, neither any Physic whatever* prescribed by S. N. in the whole course of his life.”

I believe that there is not a man upon earth so amply replenished with *modest* assurance as W. R. W. alias Justitias Vindex, alias Amicus. Before I sent my narrative to the press, I called upon Mrs. Young, and in presence of Mr. Young and Miss Young, read it to her; and she and they, all approved of what was said concerning Rodford.

In a day or two after the narrative appeared in print, Miss Young asked Mr. James Churchouse to walk in and read the paper. He did so, and when he came to that part respecting Rodford, he read it to Mrs. Young, and asked her if the account I had given of him was true. She replied it was true, and particularly specified what effects the medicines had produced. Mr. Young remembered his case and confirmed what I had written. Messrs. Plaister, Robert and Thomas Churchouse, and many others, remember having many times heard the late Mr. Young merrily tell, how quickly the doctor and he himself had cured Rodford. Mr. Norman, Surgeon of Langport, knows that Rodford was under my care; had medicines dispensed for him; and that he put off his antics by the next day. But admitting that Rodford did not take the medicines which I directed, how does this invalidate my account? People of the Faculty seldom stay to see their medicines taken. This is the province of the attendants. But this I can by no means admit in Rodford's case; seeing I was informed by the family, that he had taken his medicines with strong and evident effect. It would be wasting time, to follow my antagonist through his inconsistencies and witticisms. For this reason I leave him to the stings of his own

conscience, if any he has. Sincerely is it to be wished, that the disgrace he has incurred by his illiberality and inconsistency, may work a reformation in him: and that in future he may so apply his faculties to the study of the world, and the knowledge of himself, as to behave and live becoming his vocation, to the credit of his profession, and comfort of his worthy friends. These are my wishes. If they should be accomplished, I shall think my time well employed, and greatly rejoice at the happy change.—When it is considered what length of time has elapsed since the Reformation; since the Treasures of Wisdom and Truth have been published in our mother tongue; since the Glorious Light of the Everlasting Gospel has openly been shining upon every inquisitive mind;—how disgraceful is it to human nature to reflect upon the gross folly which still abounds, and stimulates the enthusiasts to acts of chicanery and pious fraud; as if such practices were necessary to support the interest of religion! In few years it is hoped, it will be a matter of astonishment, that there was a person to be found, silly enough to be duped by so ridiculous an impostor as George Lukins, in the year, 1788.

If we for a moment consider the rapid, the daily improvements that have lately been made in the Arts and Sciences; how must we wonder at that darkens and superstition, which prevail at this time! To what cause is this disgraceful ignorance to be attributed? Is it to the rewards annexed to a slavish compliance with forms and systems which are at best useless, if they are not unreasonable and contradictory?

If to the latter,—remove O ye great ones the stumbling block! Let the religion of the holy Jesus have its free course! Abolish all Antichristian Subscriptions! Pull down the Hierarchy, suffer the heavenly Doctrines of the Gospel, as a burning and shining light, to illumine the Inhabitants of this Isle!

And be ye not like unto the Orthodox Jews, in the days of our Lord! But be ye first in *this*, and in every good and perfect work! Let the whole world see the light that is in you; and copying your brilliant example, glorify your Father who is in heaven! Of this be ye assured that a christian's duty, is a reasonable service, a perfect law of liberty! Freedom of inquiry will powerfully tend, and will ultimately remove uncertainties, difficulties and disputes.

The doctrines of the gospel are perfect; and strip men of their early prejudices, are more easily to be understood, than the laws of our country. Yet our Lawyers are agreed in the explanation and powers of our statutes. This agreement in opinion arises from the amplest liberty in studying of the law.

Why will you then hold forth *rewards for a slavish subscription, to Articles, Canons, and Forms*, which are not only *contradictory and disgraceful* to your understanding; but which your *greatest champions*
cannot

cannot reconcile to each other; and which no man can conform to? how dreadful is it to require of the Clergy, a subscription to such abominable absurdities! absurdities which the Clergy must even be sworn to be governed by! The Lord God Almighty, the God and Father of Men, Angels, and of our Lord Jesus Christ will not, with impunity, be mocked! Proclamations without the removal of these offences, will be found inadequate to their purposes. For whilst sophistry or infidelity remain with our public teachers; as the natural and necessary consequence of their servile acquiescence and submission; the external pomp and grimace of your pious pretences notwithstanding,—what beneficial effects can be expected from your formal preaching? By the bulk of mankind, especially the most knowing part, you will, you must often be looked upon in your ministerial capacity, as not more valuable at best, than “sounding Brass, or tinkling Cymbals.” In vain will false alarms, and visionary terrors be held forth to the world, to enforce compliance with the externals of such a system of religion. Let *Collusion*, and *Fraud*, and *Priest-craft*, and *Juggling them*, be for ever forgotten. No dark contrivance is, nor can be wanting, to enforce the delightful study, the love of truth. For truth and justice have ever been, and ever will be, immutable.

The cause of virtue and religion, need not other recommendation or support, than that of honest dispassionate argument and rational inquiry. The beauty of holiness must ever produce the most amiable, the most captivating effects and pleasing sensations. Its refulgent splendor dissipates gloomy apprehensions, like as the sun, suddenly emerging from opaque clouds, into a clear sky, in an instant emits its brilliant rays, over our hemisphere.

Yatton, August 28, 1788.

S. N.

F I N I S.



